

Demystifying What Makes Nonfiction Lessons Effective, PreK-2



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Nonfiction in the Primary Grades



Nonfiction has a positive impact on literacy development

- ✓ increases students' background knowledge
- ✓ exposes students to the language and structure of expository texts
- ✓ sparks curiosity and desire to learn about the world
- ✓ helps students identify with people other than themselves



Nonfiction has a positive impact on literacy development

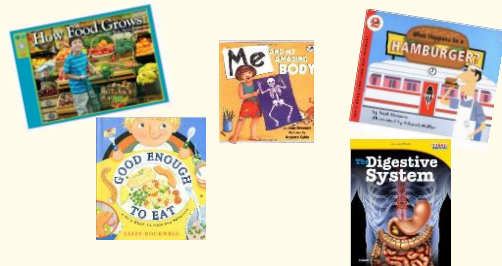
- ✓ Provides print-embedded within visual information and illustrations, which supports print awareness and early decoding and word recognition
- ✓ May help students make a smoother transition to the demands of intermediate-level content reading.



Nonfiction builds critical disciplinary knowledge



Nonfiction lends itself to integrated, inquiry- based units of study



How well we teach

is

How well they learn



Anita Archer

Bringing Informational Text Into the K-2 Classroom

Goal 1: Expose children to more complex texts

Students learn more when they attempt to read more challenging text with the support of a teacher who is mediating the text experience.

Goal 2: Pay More Attention to Oral Language

Oral language skills and vocabulary underlie comprehension. Listening to and discussing informational texts read aloud help students build schemas for later disciplinary learning.

Bringing Informational Text Into the K-2 Classroom

Goal 3: Be More Intentional

Being surrounded with high-quality nonfiction texts, engaging in a rich exchange of ideas and information with the teacher and other students, and participating in teacher-directed and student-initiated learning opportunities helps students gain important disciplinary knowledge.

Goal 4: Explicitly Teach from the Text

Participation in lessons that are focused on the big ideas teachers want students to come away with after reading a particular text provides students with access to grade level vocabulary and concepts.

Bringing Informational Text Into the K-2 Classroom

Goal 5: Differentiate Instruction

Adapting instruction, rather than material, helps all readers meet the demands of more challenging text and reap the benefits of the language and concepts inherent in that text.

Before selecting instructional techniques, consider those primary students who are

- not yet proficient in decoding
- decoding but not yet reading fluently
- reading fluently from grade-level text
- reading fluently from above grade-level text



“Preparation for reading complex informational texts should begin at the very earliest elementary schools grades... Having students **listen to informational read-alouds in the early grades** helps lay the necessary foundation for students’ reading and understanding of increasingly complex texts on their own in subsequent grades.”

(CCSS ELA Standards, page 33)

Using Challenging Text

When students were placed in **more challenging texts surrounded by scaffolded instruction by the teacher**, they actually made greater gains than those students who only spent time in at-level texts or in challenging texts without support. Their discoveries suggest that properly supporting readers in more challenging texts **actually accelerated progress**.

Stahl and Heubach, Fluency Oriented Reading Instruction, 2005

Informational Text Use

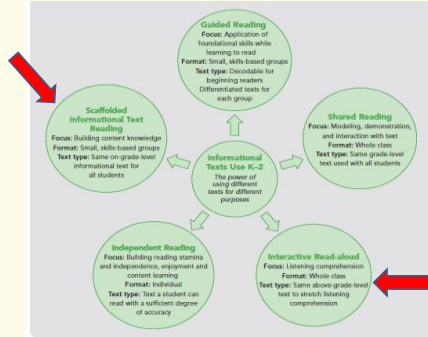


FIGURE 2.1 Informational Text Use K-2: The Power of Using Different Texts for Different Purposes

Steps in a lesson

1. Prepare to read
2. Guide reading
3. Explicitly teach comprehension and/or fluency
4. Facilitate connections



What determines what is taught?

The text

The purpose for reading

Choosing Informational Text

- Is the book/material visually appealing?



- Is the book/material accurate?



- Is the writing style engaging?



Identifying the Purpose for Reading

What are the big ideas I want my students to know after reading this text?

What standards and skills can be addressed during this lesson?

Which text features (if any) will need to be taught before the reading?

Which concepts and vocabulary need to be developed?

Step One: Prepare to Read

What's the overall purpose for reading and how can I share that with students?

How can I build excitement for reading by engaging students in previewing the text?

Step 2: Guide Reading



THE GOAL
**Making high-quality informational
 text of appropriate complexity
 accessible to all readers**

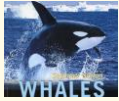
Step 2: Guide Reading

Make text accessible to children

- * Understand new words
- * Recognize and utilize text features
- * Determine important ideas
- * Use pictures



Step 2: Guide Reading (cont.)

Help children understand
while reading

Use prior knowledge
 Connect text to self
 Make and confirm
 predictions
 Visualize

The great whales are the world's giant animals. This humpback whale is breaching—jumping almost clear out of the water and then crashing down in a huge spray of foam. The humpback whale is longer than a big bus and heavier than a trailer truck. Some great whales are even larger than the tongue of a blue whale weighs as much as an elephant.

Whales are not fish, as some people mistakenly think. Fish are cold-blooded animals. This means their body temperature changes with their surroundings. Whales are mammals that live in the sea. Like cats, dogs, monkeys, and people, whales are warm-blooded. Their body temperature remains much the same—whether they swim in the icy waters of the Arctic or in warm tropical seas.



Step 2: Guide Reading (cont.)

Help children understand
while reading

- Ask questions
- Answer questions
- Give and support opinions
- Draw and support conclusions
- Determine cause and effect

Perhaps the best known of the toothed whales is the killer whale, or orca. That's because there are killer whales that perform in marine parks around the country. A killer whale is actually the largest member of the dolphin family. A male can grow to over thirty feet and weigh nine tons.

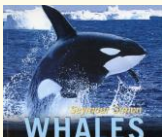
Orcas are found in all of the world's oceans, from the poles to the tropics. They hunt for food in herds called pods. Orcas eat fish, squid, and penguins as well as seals, sea lions, and other sea mammals, including even the largest whales. Yet they are usually gentle in captivity, and there is no record that an orca has ever caused a human death.



Step 2: Guide Reading (cont.)

Help children understand while reading

- Distinguish between fantasy and fact
- Compare and contrast pictures and text



Text/Access features

- Make content accessible to reader
- Organize information to increase understanding and comprehension

Table of Contents
 Headings
 Index
 Glossary

Captions/Labels
 Photos
 Drawings
 Bullets

Visual Aids
 Sidebars
 Text boxes
 Bold Text



Steps in a lesson

1. Prepare to read
2. Guide reading
3. **Explicitly teach comprehension and/or fluency**
4. Facilitate connections



Step 3: Explicitly Teach Comprehension and/or Fluency

Comprehension

- A deeper examination of what was taught during the guided reading.
- Applying strategy to next texts

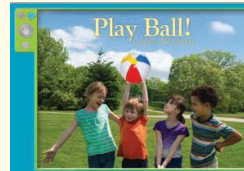
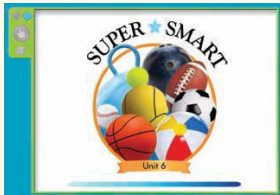


Fluency

- * Expression
- * Appropriate rate
- * Accuracy

Involving children in shared, paired, and repeated reading experiences

Planning for Nonfiction Read Aloud Experiences

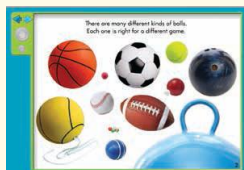
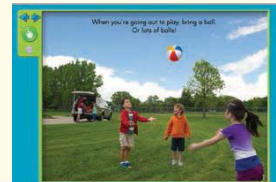


Step One: Prepare to Read

What does the picture show? Let's name as many of the balls as we can. Each kind of ball is used to play a specific sport or game, and there are different ways to play with these balls.

Set purpose
Listen while I read the title; then read it again with me.

As I read aloud, you can listen to add to what you already know about games that use balls, and maybe learn about a game that is new.



Let's think about how all these balls are different from one another.

I'm wondering how these would feel if I picked them up. Can any of you think of words to describe any of these balls?

What you think is going to happen on this next page? What kind of ball is this page all about?

On this page, the word *hit* is bigger and darker than the other words. Hit is an important word because it tells you what you can do with a baseball.



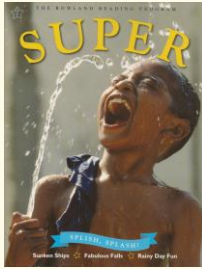
Why is the word *kick* bigger and darker than the other words?

What happens when a soccer player kicks the ball into the next? How do you know? Let's look back and find out from the text.

What do you notice about the word *bounce*? When you bounce a ball, what does the ball do?



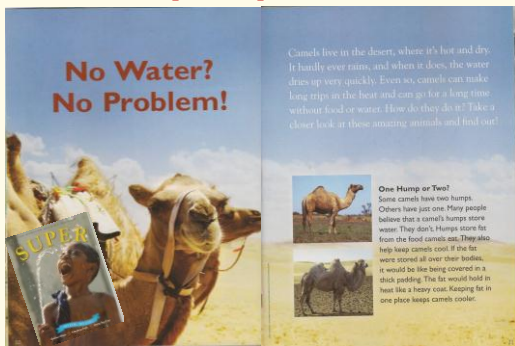
Planning Informational Text Lessons: Small Group Reading in Grades 1 and 2



Step 1: Prepare to Read



Step 1: Prepare to Read



Step 2: Guide Reading

Goal One: Make text accessible

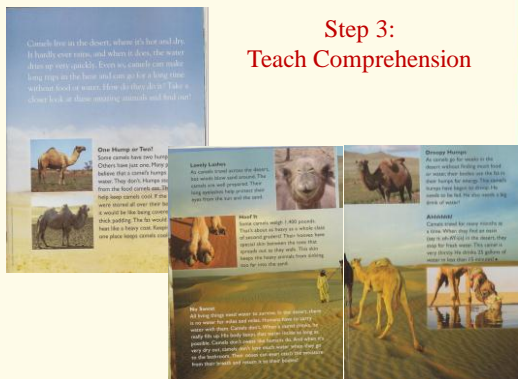
Understand new words (desert, oasis, hooves)

Recognize and utilize text features (table of contents, headings)

Use pictures



Step 3: Teach Comprehension



Reminder

Goal 5 is Differentiate Instruction

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Guiding the Reading of Below-Level Readers

- Front load new vocabulary and concepts before reading
- Assess each child's decoding and fluency as they read aloud individually for the teacher
- After reading, pull excerpts from text for use in specific teaching of foundational skills
- Provide extended reading opportunities

Guiding the Reading of On-Level Readers

Identify and teach vocabulary necessary for understanding the selection

Assess each child's decoding abilities and fluency

Provide ample opportunities for rereading and guided oral reading

Guiding the Reading of Above-Level Readers

Determine consolidation of all of the foundational skills and fluency

Foster independent reading

Encourage interdisciplinary opportunities

Step 4: Facilitate Connections

Written response: "Write about. . ."

Lasting lessons: A real-life connection to the text

Cross-curricular connections

Learn more: text or technology



Planning for Instruction

Planning Informational Text Lessons: Small Group Reading in Grades 1 and 2



Grade One



Grade Two

*Your turn! Try out your lesson plan template
Divide into groups of 3*

Group Member #1: Plan for Steps 1 and 4

Group Member #2: Plan for Step 2

Group Member #3: Plan for Step 3

Big ideas

We live in an information age, where nonfiction dominates reading and writing.

The Common Core State Standards clearly address the need for reading informational text.

We need to expose our children to high quality informational text.

We need to explicitly teach our children how to read nonfiction.



Thank You
for your participation today.



ROWLAND READING FOUNDATION

Our Mission:
Improving Reading
in the Primary Grades

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